

South Dakota AFNR

Academic Integration Activities: Example #13

→ *Wildlife and fisheries students can analyze factors that influence the credibility of informational sources.*

1. Ag Standard

Wildlife and Fisheries WR 2.1

Discuss the importance of hunting/harvesting fish and wildlife species and related responsibility.

- > Identify different viewpoints of hunting/fishing by interviewing people.
- > Describe wildlife harvesting techniques and procedures.
- > Identify management practices to protect fish and wildlife from overexploitation.

2. Academic Standard

11.R.5.1

Students can analyze factors that influence the credibility of informational sources.

- > Identify authorship.
- > Identify sponsorship.

3. Background Information

We live in the age of abundant and easily accessible information. Access to information can be priceless; it also can be damaging if used without caution. Evaluating resources for credibility can be an invaluable tool at any point throughout one's life. Evaluating is a higher order thinking task and not necessarily an inherit skill. Evaluating the credibility of resources requires a system (even if informal) for establishing credibility and practice.

As citizens, society benefits when its members are well informed and cognizant of differing viewpoints surrounding controversial issues. There are many times in life, especially outside of the academic world, when we are faced with information representing the opinion or beliefs of an individual or group of individuals. Recognize that opinions are not a bad thing, as they help us understand other peoples' point of view. That said, it is critical that we are able to distinguish opinion, hypothesis, and hard facts.

4. Example in Context/Guided Practice Exercises

Share specific literature, watch a documentary-style video clip, or read information aloud to students from this web link:

http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/bear_hunting/Background information for teacher

Either individually, by writing, or in small group discussion, ask students to respond to the following questions:

- > What is your initial reaction in hearing/seeing this information? (How does it make you feel?)
- > Would this information possibly cause you to change any of your previously held opinions on the matter or change any particular behavior?
- > Picture someone you know well, but who you would consider to be very unlike you in his or her views/opinions/way of thinking. Describe how this person might respond to the above questions.

Provide students with information of an opposing viewpoint(s) to the same issue:

- > <http://www.bearsinbc.com/pages/02grizzly/02integral.html>
 - Great one to start with
- > <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/hunt/bear/popndist.htm>
- > <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/PUBL/wlnotebook/bear.htm#mana>

Either individually, by writing, or in small group discussion, ask students to respond to the following questions:

- > What is your initial reaction to hearing/reading/seeing this information?
- > In what ways does it differ from the first example shared?
- > How would that same person you pictured in the last example respond to hearing this?

Guide students through a discussion regarding credibility of resources using the following prompts and techniques:

- > List the opinions presented (brief paraphrase) on the white board as students share them aloud.
- > Ask students to list reasons as to why hearing opinions from both sides of an issue is important.
- > Ask students why it is critical to become informed citizens who can hear multiple viewpoints and distinguish fact from opinion.
 - What are some of the ways we can identify if something is providing fact or opinion?
 - Ensure the following points are covered:
 - Figure out who published the information.
 - Be on alert for hidden agendas.
 - Scan the periphery of a webpage or printed literature for clues.
 - How does the web address end?(.com, .org, .net, .edu, or .gov)
 - Are there obvious sponsors or groups that may have provided funding for the page?
 - Check whether credible sources cited.
 - Assess the credibility of other websites to which the page links.
- > Guide students through the above strategies as the class helps you assess each of the items above.
- > Assess student understanding of the concept of establishing credibility. If needed, guide them through another example as a class.

Provide students with additional examples of opinions surrounding the harvesting/hunting of wildlife. (Either have students at a computer, or provide groups with literature printed off websites of your choice.)

5. Independent Practice Exercises

There are three tasks in this exercise:

- a. Identify an issue surrounding the different viewpoints regarding hunting/harvesting wildlife within your geographic region or state.
- b. Identify a minimum of two websites with pages dedicated to the issue.
- c. For each website, capture notes addressing its credibility.
 - > Provide students with the list of strategies/questions used to assess in the guided example.

6. Notes

A number of quality resources and activities related to the academic standard can be found with a simple search using any online search engine. Before “recreating the wheel,” take a moment to check some out. Some are better than others, but you will likely find a good nugget or two you can put to good use.

This activity could be taken one step further by asking students to create a small worksheet they could use to assess the credibility of information found online for any of their academic classes.